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Employee Newsletter
April 1992

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Help Yourself: tips on clean air, music, food preparation, positive attitudes and much more.

MDT takes 8 of 11 State Incentive Awards

Governor Stan Stephens awarded 11 state employees just over $2,000 in state incentive awards on March 3 for their work and suggestions on improving the operations of state government. Eight of those awards were received by MDT employees.

Dan Williams received $1,000 for his leadership in developing a public awareness program regarding highway hazards, particularly relating to snowplows. William's superiors say the program will result in fewer highway accidents and could save lives.

Other MDT employees receiving recognition include:

Bonnie Sedita of the Missoula District, who received $100 for her recommendations that improved electronic mail communications between the department's Helena headquarters and the district offices.

Ken Witzel and Gene Hansen of the Billings District, whose suggestion improved the tail-light snow deflectors on department snowplows, making them more visible to motorists and improving safety. Each received $37.50 for his effort.

Truman Bovee III, Jim Roan, Harold McLaughlin and Dick Toaves, also of the Billings District, collaborated in designing a device that easily removes broken wooden posts from the ground. Each received $25.

Governor Stan Stephens (right) stands with State Employee Incentive Award recipients. From left to right, Harold McLaughlin, Jim Roan, Truman Bovee III and Dick Toaves. Also honored were Dan Williams, Bonnie Sedita, Ken Witzel, Gene Hansen, D. Michaele Wigen, Tony Tacke and Karen Lundwall.

Story and photo © 1992 Independent Record

Director's Column

We've accomplished a lot since last July when MDT was formed. Reorganization is well underway now and we're seeing the results. And several new initiatives that have promising potential are underway as well.

One major new initiative is goal setting and development of a comprehensive strategic plan—what I like to call a business plan—to better serve the state's transportation needs.

These things—goal setting and planning—are essential, especially for an agency as big as the state Department of Transportation. And we're involving all facets of the public and private sector in developing the plan.

You should have received a copy of the questionnaire by now asking for your opinions and comments on a wide variety of issues. The questionnaire was mailed to about 7,000 Montanans, including every MDT employee. If you didn't get one, please request one.

And I encourage you to be frank in your responses. The survey is being handled by a consultant and all the responses go directly to them. There'll be no effort to identify individual responses whatsoever—we're interested in frank responses and in characterizing the responses based on the kind of work you do. But we have no interest or desire in identifying individual commentors.

I have a strong feeling that government departments should be very responsive to their customers—the taxpayers of this state (which includes most of us) and the guests who visit. As I've said many times before, our goal at the Department of Transportation is pretty simple—to do a better job serving the public.

What that means specifically and how we're going to go about doing it is the business at hand in writing the strategic plan. We've looked at what the other states and other agencies have done and we're off to a good start now, with a first-class consultant guiding us along the way. So I think we can all look forward to the results. We'll be sharing them with you later this summer, and the strategic plan that's developed as a result will be widely distributed.

In the meantime, we have a big construction season coming up again and the next few months will be busy with the end of the state fiscal year just around the corner. As I said, please be sure to respond to the questionnaire you'll receive. And I hope you'll join me in looking forward to a busy and productive year.

Bureau Monitors Hazardous Wastes

As a first step in a new Hazardous Materials Management Plan, the MDT Environmental and Hazardous Waste Bureau will conduct an audit of all department facilities.

The bureau was created by the Director in October 1991 and given the duty of dealing with all hazardous materials and wastes in the department, and insuring compliance with environmental regulations.

A Butte hazardous materials consulting firm, MSE, was contracted to develop the management plan and train MDT personnel.

Department facilities will be audited by 33 MDT personnel who will record:

- activities that use or generate hazardous materials or hazardous waste;
- the equipment used; and
- storage of the materials or waste.

Spills, dumps and drain sites will also be recorded.

Employees performing the audits received 40 hours of safety training regarding hazardous materials.

Once identified, waste streams and spill sites will be cleaned up and materials and wastes no longer in use will be disposed of in accordance with an MSE management plan written to assure compliance with federal and state laws.

Recommendations will also be made to cut back or totally eliminate hazardous waste streams to increase worker safety and reduce long-run expenses.

The bureau's crews have also been busy from Baker to Saltese to Wolf Point determining the source and extent of contamination from the department's leaking underground storage tanks. Crews will determine cost-effective, cleanup methods for those sites.

Consultants are used to assist the bureau's cleanup of the right-of-way before construction begins. Examples include: measuring heavy metal content of soil in the Clark Fork Super Fund Site; removing abandoned underground storage tanks along or within the right-of-way; and tracking major leaks migrating through utility corridors in Great Falls, Billings and Conrad.

A study of the potential toxicity of preserved wood is another of the bureau's research projects. MSE measured amounts of leakable hazardous materials in various preserved timber, such as timber preserved with creosote, to determine if any types of wood may require expensive disposal treatment as a hazardous waste. Final results are expected in May.

Adopt-A-Highway Sweeps Montana

April 22 Montana's Adopt-A-Highway program swings into action with an announcement from Governor Stan Stephens. A statewide cleanup is planned for the following Saturday, April 25th, according to Dennis Unsworth of MDT's Public Affairs Bureau.

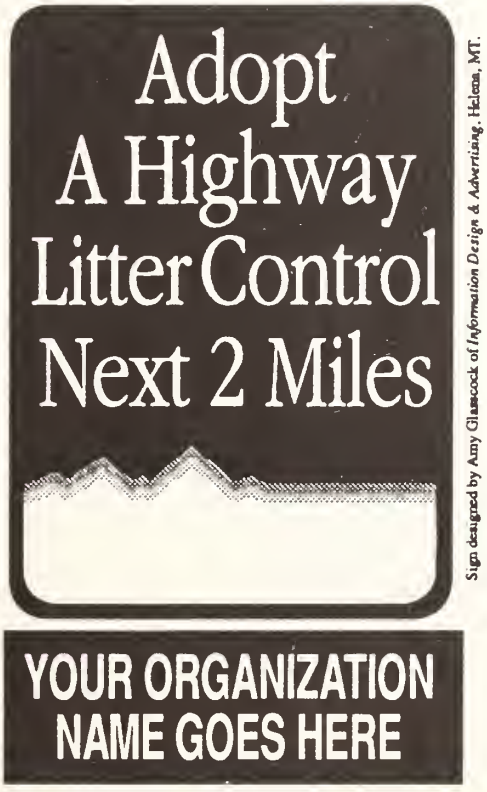
With Stephens' announcement scheduled for Earth Day, Unsworth said, Montana becomes part of a nationwide highway cleanup program originated in Texas in 1985. The Texas program, he said, saw 3,000 groups adopt over 6,000 miles of Texas highway and reduce statewide litter by 60%. Forty-three states, he said, now have similar programs.

"Public service groups in Montana are anxious to do this same work," said Rusty Wrigg of the maintenance division, "and the department is ready and willing to cooperate in the effort to beautify the highways of Montana."

Historically, Montana's Boy Scouts and several civic groups cleaned litter from scattered sections of roadway. The scouts received national recognition for their work, according to Unsworth, and were recipients of several Take Pride in America awards from the U.S. Department of Interior.

Montana's Adopt-A-Highway program expands the Boy Scout project by going statewide with regional coordination from maintenance engineers in each district office. To participate, groups must sign a two-year agreement to pick up litter at least three times a year and adopt sections of highway at least two miles long. In return, the department agrees to supply and retrieve litter bags and provide safety vests and signs along the highways.

"Everyone wins with this new program," Wrigg said. "Even with the initial costs, we eventually save money on labor costs and can concentrate our maintenance personnel in other areas. And anyway, he added, clean highways present a positive image for the department and a great image for the State of Montana."



Sign designed by Amy Glascock of *Information Design & Advertising*, Helena, MT.

Groups wanting to participate must sign a two-year contract and agree to:

- pick up litter a least three times a year–generally in the Spring, Summer and Fall;
- adopt sections of highway that are at least two miles long;
- furnish adult supervision for each group of 10 participants under 15 years old;
- wear safety vests provided by the department during the cleanup;
- provide safety seminars to participants at least twice a year; and
- provide adequate drinking water and first-aid supplies for participants.

The department agrees to:

- supply bags;
- remove trash bags after the cleanup effort; and
- provide signs and safety vests along the highway.

Telephone Services for Hearing Impaired Available

Those with hearing and speech impairments can now "talk" to MDT on the telephone.

As a step toward meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the department installed a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) in the Director's office in Helena.

The TDD is a computer terminal that receives messages typed by deaf, hearing impaired or speech impaired individuals on a similar terminal and allows the department to "talk" back to the caller.

On March 18, Kryss Kuntz of the Montana Telecommunications for the Telephone Handicapped program, conducted a training session attended by 10 MDT employees who learned how to operate the TDD.

To call the department's TDD, dial 444-7696.

Update – Department's Strategic Plan

Much has been accomplished on the department's strategic plan since its February kickoff, according to coordinator Sandy Straehl.

In early March, Ron Mester, the department's consultant for the project, met with MDT staff and the Strategic Plan's Advisory Committee. The committee's membership represents a cross section of MDT customers and will continue to meet periodically throughout the plan's development.

At its first meeting, Mester facilitated discussion on the following questions:

- In serving the state, what should be the department's key role?
- What are the department's most important strengths and weaknesses?
- What criteria are used to judge the success of the department?

The input from the Advisory Committee and MDT managers served as the basis for a survey drafted by Mester. With this survey, more than 7,000 individuals—including *all* MDT employees—were asked to contribute to the strategic planning process.

MDT employees received the survey at their homes the week of April 6. It had two principal parts. The first section was identical to the survey that went to more than 5,000 of our customers, including 3,000 randomly selected Montana residents. The second part, which was sent only to department employees, asked for employee opinions of MDT.

To insure confidentiality, postpaid envelopes were included. Employees were asked to mail the surveys directly to the Towers Perrin firm in California where the responses will be tabulated.

Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed, according to Straehl, and no one outside of Towers Perrin will ever see the completed questionnaires.

Your opinions are important to the success of the MDT. So, Straehl said, if you haven't done so, take an hour of your workday to fill out the survey and mail it back to the consultant no later than April 17.

What's next? Survey results will be analyzed, while in-house employees collect data to identify trends affecting MDT.

Results of the trends analysis and survey will be used to identify key issues facing the department and will lead to the development of department-wide goals, strategic initiatives and a mission statement.

Results of the survey will be available to all MDT employees this summer.

Questions? Ask a member of the plan's Executive Steering Committee, including all division administrators, as well as the deputies, Ken Rapp representing the District Engineers, Russ McDonald and Dennis Unsworth. Or call Sandy Straehl in Helena at 444-7692.

Happenings at MDT

Service Awards

Service awards were presented in the following categories:

35 years

Lawrence J. Chezik, Delbert R. Michels, Duane J. Strohmayer, John J. Walsh, Larry O. Williams.

30 years

Raymond A. Buell, Kenneth L. Chrisinger, Lester L. Cloninger, Douglas D. Fandrich, Jacob Liebelt, Douglas C. Ruggles, Chris R. Sakelaris, Rusty Wrigg, Joseph J. Zimmerman.

25 years

Sylvan Donegan, Paul C. Green, Joseph F. Kintli, Donald J. Lovely, William D. Morton, Jr.

20 years

Lynn A. Bice, Horace E. Hudson, James C. Martin, William L. McChesney, William E. Pedula.

15 years

Kerry G. Brown, Eugene Mike Butzlaff, Somxay Chareunsky, Richard B. Clark, Clyde A. Gorder, Bernard T. Hanley, Sherrie L. Hoffman, William A. Lay, William J. Maloney, William Molina, Jr., Ron F. Verlanic, Richard R. Wiley.

10 years

Jacque Brett, Diane E. Burbank, Charles M. Kimmet, Mark L. Snow, Kenneth F. Varnado, Dwight A. Wade.

5 years

Barbara M. Anderson, Deborah J. Dils, David M. Fredricksen, Bryan L. Fuhrman, Elden T. Gittens, Gordon W. McGaw, Kitti I. Mundt, John N. Nicholson, William A. Shegina, Rosemary Shibley, Robert H. Stensland.

Retirements

30 or more years of service with state government:

James Baldwin, Field Project Manager, Culbertson, 44 years, 1 month.

Clifford Dunn, District Centralized Services Supervisor, Billings, 38 years, 3 months.

Harold Wiebe, Field Project Manager, Dillon, 36 years.

Warren Pitman, Engineering Technician II, Bozeman, 31 years, 10 months.

Joseph Zimmerman, CE Specialist IV, Helena, 30 years, 2 months.

Longevity honors for 20-plus years:

Robert Damm, GVW Officer I, Culbertson, 25 years, 10 months (8 years MDT).

George Trask, Mechanic/Machinist, Lewistown, 24 years, 6 months (16 years MDT).

Posture Perfect

Basic Tips for Back Health

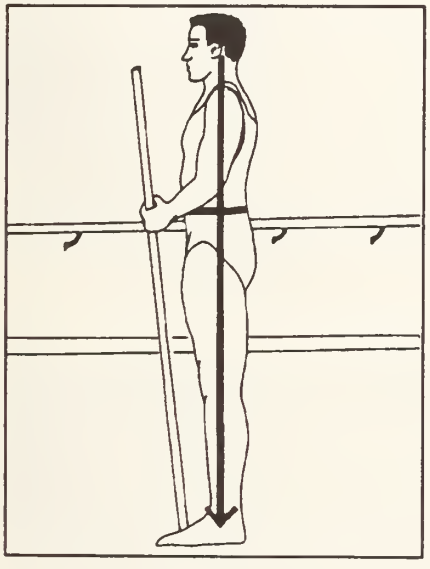
It's true that good posture is a reflection of the way we look and feel about ourselves, but it's much more than that.

Good posture is one of the simplest things each of us can do to help our backs stay healthy and pain-free. Good posture can prevent muscle pain, stiffness and tension as well as backaches, pain and injury.

Good posture is actually quite simple. It means keeping the three natural curves of your back (neck, chest and lower back) in balance while standing, sitting or lying down.

Standing

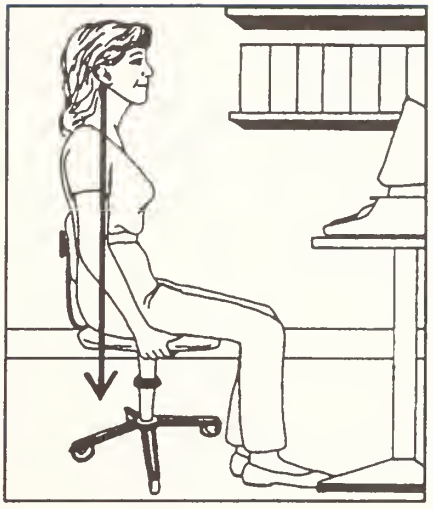
Contrary to what most of us were taught, good posture does not mean standing with shoulders thrust back, chin forward and spine straight as an arrow. Actually, you're using good standing posture when your ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles are "stacked" in a straight line. (Note: your shoulders should be relaxed and your knees slightly bent.)



You're using good standing posture when your ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles are "stacked" in a straight line.

Sitting

While sitting, you can keep your spine balanced by again "stacking" ears over shoulders and shoulders over hips. To prevent lower back strain, place a lumbar roll (or rolled-up towel or sweater) between your lower back and the back of your chair. Keep your buttocks resting against the chair back, and if your feet don't reach the floor, rest them on a footstool or a box.



While sitting, "stack" ears over shoulders and shoulders over hips. Use a rolled-up towel or sweater to support your lower back.

Lying Down

When lying down or sleeping, try resting on your side in a modified "fetal" position (knees slightly bent toward chest) or on your back with a pillow placed beneath your knees. Sleeping with more than one pillow under your head can exaggerate your neck curve and can place undue stress on your back. Choose a firm mattress for adequate back support.

When lying down, rest on your side in a modified "fetal" position (knees slightly bent toward chest).

A Healthier Back

By using good posture throughout your day, you can help keep your back balanced and reduce your risk of back problems and injury. You'll not only feel better, you'll look better, too.

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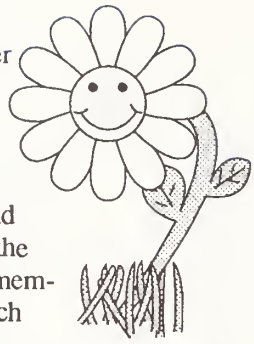
Help Yourself *Organizational Development Supplement*

Spring Has Sprung!



With the warmer weather, there will be more walkers, runners and bikers on the roads. Remember to watch carefully, especially before sunrise and just after sunset.

Take a Breather...

Your health partly depends on the air you breathe: the cleaner the better. Respirators help insure the air you breathe is clean. They protect you from toxic or disease-producing vapor, gases or from a lack of oxygen. But remember, a respirator won't protect you if it doesn't fit properly.

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What's the Word?

Watch how you pronounce *asterisk*. Uninformed speakers leave out the final "s" incorrectly making the work *asterik*.

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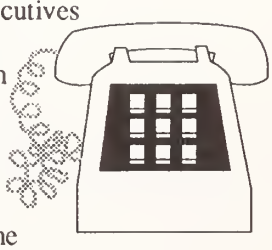
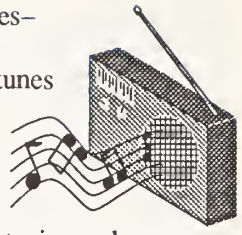
Talk Isn't Cheap



Executives say they spend an average of 2.3 hours a day on the phone (14 workweeks a year). About 21 percent of those calls are actually wasteful or unnecessary. That adds up to three 40-hour workweeks spent in unprofitable chatter.

Best Mood Music to Help You Relax:



Oldies–Old familiar tunes you enjoy, whether they're "easy" listening or heavy metal. Strange or newer music, meanwhile, produces less relaxation or leaves listeners "more tense than without music" of any kind.

Food for Thought

The real measure of your wealth is how much you would be worth if you lost all your money.

Food Preparation Hints...

- Substitute applesauce for up to half of the oil in a muffin or quick bread recipe. It lowers the fat and calories.
- Try garlic, parsley, oregano or basil instead of salt when seasoning foods.
- Try Butter Buds instead of butter in macaroni & cheese, rice dishes or other packaged mixes. Butter Buds are low in calories and have no fat!

Managers Corner

"Motivating is about bringing people to their potential and keeping them up so they and you get the most out of their jobs."

Ways to motivate:

- Provide challenging work
- Give effective feedback on job performance
- Give recognition for a job well done
- Involve people in the decision-making process
- Provide a pleasant work environment.

Help Yourself Continued

Are You a Winner or a Loser?

- A winner says, "Let's find out;" a loser says, "No one knows."
- A winner makes commitments; a loser makes promises.
- A winner listens; a loser just waits until it's his or her turn to talk.
- A winner does more than their job; a loser says, "I only work here."
- A winner says, "I'm good, but not as good as I ought to be;" a loser says, "I'm not as bad as a lot of other people."

To be a winner, your work attitude and performance must be a winning combination, with high productivity and top-quality goals.

More Food for Thought

"My grandfather once told me that there are two kinds of people: those who do the work and those who take the credit. He told me to try to be in the first group; there was less competition there."

–Indira Gandhi

Let Us Know

Last month, the *Help Yourself* section in the *Interchange* was the first of a regular feature. We plan to write about safety, health and management. Let us know if you like it, or if you have something you'd like us to include. Send information to Theresa Cash, Organizational Development in Helena. Thanks, and here's to your health.

What's Your Safety Attitude?

Many people tend to ignore safety advice until an accident happens to them or someone they know. These are five steps to help you develop a good safety attitude:

- Focus. Concentrate on your present task. If you are tired, bored or distracted, you may slip up.
- Time. Take time and do the job correctly. Take time to put on safety equipment. Manage your time well.
- Strength. Strength is not always physical, sometimes it's mental or emotional. Don't be pressured to take shortcuts. Be strong enough to resist peer pressure, and do the right thing.
- Responsibility. Think of yourself as a team member and take responsibility even if a certain task isn't your job. Clean up that broken glass or harmful substance, even if it's not your responsibility, before it hurts someone.
- Risk. Be smart and avoid risks whenever you can. Weigh the risks every time you do a job in a certain way and even if the risk is small, don't take a chance.

Employee's Corner

When your boss procrastinates...

- Put the responsibility on yourself. Say, "I'm having a problem meeting this deadline."
- Offer assistance. Do anything to help move the project along.
- Start early with reminders. Press for specifics from your boss.

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Division News

Great Falls

The following are promotions in the Great Falls District:
Jerilee Davidson: *promoted* - Accounting Clerk III – Great Falls.
Suzanne Ordaz: *hired* - Administrative Clerk I – Great Falls.
Richard Hestekin: *hired* - Truck Driver – Cascade.
Vance Morrison: *hired* - Service/Comb. A– Great Falls.
Dana Rogers: *hired* - Truck Driver – Dupuyer.
Rod Stirling: *hired* - Truck Driver – Shelby.
Glenn Smith: *promoted* - Equipment Operator II – Dutton.
Jean Paris: *hired* - Motor Carrier Services Officer – Shelby/Coutts.
Myrlin Schatz: *promoted* - Motor Carrier Services Officer – Shelby/Coutts.
Gary Berg: *promoted* - Engineering Technician III – Great Falls.
Allen Stratton: *hired* - Service/Comb. B – Shelby.
Leonard Young: *promoted* - Mechanic/Machinist – Shelby.
Myron Cobell: *lateral transfer* - Equipment Operator – Browning.
Beth Scofield: *promoted*- Engineering Technician II – Great Falls.
Lonnie Arthur: *hired* - Truck Driver – Rogers Pass.
Jay Springer: *promoted* - Civil Engineer III – Great Falls.
Bernard Hanley: *promoted* - Engineering Technician II – Great Falls.
Robert Bleecker: *promoted* - Engineering Technician II – Great Falls.
Matthew Ladenburg: *promoted* - Working Shop Foreman – Havre.
Vance Morrison: *promoted* - Truck Driver – Wolf Creek.
Steve Loney: *hired* - Service/Comb. A – Great Falls.
Randy Robertson: *hired* - Truck Driver – Shelby.

Early transportation engineers Face a major setback.

Cartoon courtesy of Kevin Beckstrom, UDOT.

Twenty-one hundred copies of this public document were produced at an estimated cost of 26¢ each for a total cost of $546.

Glendive

Daniel Bidwell: hired–Truck Driver –Colstrip.

Steven Handran: hired–Temporary Truck Driver–Malta.

Gene Nistler: hired–Assistant GVW Supervisor.

Linda Hoagland: hired–GVW compliance officer–Forsyth Scale.

Glendive District Engineer, Bruce Russell, is retiring on March 30. He started with the Department on April 5, 1954, in Billings, and was in both Helena and Havre before coming to the Glendive District.

Speak Up: How is Our EAP Working?

MDT is one of two state agencies with an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). If you or a family member used this program, tell us:

- Was it helpful?
- Would you use it again or recommend it to someone else?
- Would you like to see the program continue?
- Anything else you'd like us to know about the program?

Send your comments to Barbara Martin in the Organizational Development Bureau in Helena. This information will be used to help determine the value of the EAP. Please don't include your name or location, unless you want us to know.

INTERchange
MDT Employee Newsletter

The employee newsletter is published by the Public Affairs Bureau, Montana Department of Transportation:

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